

Janet T. Mills  
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.  
Commissioner



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**DHHS' COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY DECLARATION  
PURSUANT TO 22 M.R.S. §802(2)  
July 1, 2021**

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State of Maine first proclaimed a State of Civil Emergency on March 15, 2020, and most recently renewed it on June 11, 2021, thereby extending the State of Civil Emergency up till and including June 30, 2021;

WHEREAS, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services first proclaimed on January 31, 2020, and most recently renewed on April 15, 2021, the nationwide public health emergency (PHE) due to the continued consequences of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic;

WHEREAS, the acting Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services wrote a letter to all Governors on January 22, 2021 stating, "To assure you of our commitment to the ongoing response, we have determined that the PHE will likely remain in place for the entirety of 2021, and when a decision is made to terminate the declaration or let it expire, HHS will provide states with 60 days' notice prior to its termination";

WHEREAS, efforts to combat the pandemic continue in Maine, where 68,989 residents have been infected, 2,072 hospitalized with the virus, and 858 people dying with the virus since January 2020;

WHEREAS, despite significant overall progress in vaccinating Maine residents against COVID-19, vaccination rates remain low in certain areas (e.g., 45 percent of residents in Somerset County) and among certain groups (e.g., 48 percent of Maine residents in their 20s), putting these groups at risk of contracting COVID-19, including the highly contagious variants;

WHEREAS, an effective response to new variants requires continued vigilance by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, along with the authority to make immediate, targeted interventions and the continuation or extension of certain special measures implemented by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, to facilitate accelerated COVID-19 testing, vaccination, and outbreak response and to address risks associated with specialized locations and vulnerable populations;

WHEREAS, ensuring the Office of MaineCare Services is able to effectively implement authorized federal flexibilities in order to ensure access to medically necessary health care services related directly or indirectly to COVID-19;

WHEREAS, the indirect effects of the COVID-19 pandemic persist and may, in some instances, increase even when the case count declines – including, but not limited to, record high drug overdose deaths in Maine in 2020 with early evidence suggesting an even higher number in 2021; increased mental health challenges associated with pandemic-related unemployment, reduced income, limits on child care, and post-traumatic stress; and struggles with affordable housing, health insurance and food security;


WHEREAS, the Department administers programs and supports to the State's most vulnerable residents and works collaboratively with community and health partners to meet the direct and indirect challenges posed by COVID-19;

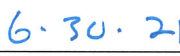
WHEREAS, the Maine Department of Labor Bureau of Unemployment Compensation has paid out more than \$2.5 billion in unemployment benefits since the March 15, 2020;

WHEREAS, the impact of the pandemic on Maine is inextricably related to the pandemic's impact nationwide given interstate commerce and travel;

NOW, THEREFORE, I hereby declare pursuant to 22 MRS §802(2), that as of the date indicated below, a health emergency exists that poses a threat to the health and safety of Maine residents.

This declaration is effective July 1, 2021, and shall remain in effect through the duration of the Public Health Emergency as declared by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

  
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Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.  
Commissioner

  
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Date